

Top Secret



National Intelligence Bulletin

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Areas of Heavy Fighting

Beirut, Lebanon



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LEBANON

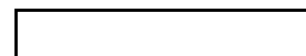
Radical Muslim forces have gained control of some previously contested ground during the heavy fighting in Beirut this week.

The Christian and Muslim combatants and the Lebanese security forces seek control of key hotels to gain a commanding field of fire over disputed territory in adjoining neighborhoods. The leftists, who occupied the St. Georges Hotel on Monday, late yesterday were vying with army troops for control of the Phoenicia Hotel.

Right-wing Phalangist militiamen evacuated the Phoenicia during a brief local truce. They suffered heavier casualties than their Muslim opponents, who apparently had moved in heavier weapons, including anti-aircraft guns supplied by the fedayeen. The Phalangists, who claimed last night to have made gains in other areas, are holding out along a front that extends from the hotel district to Beirut port. They use this corridor to supply their forces in the hotel district from more secure Phalangist strongholds south of the port.

The leftist forces are led by Ibrahim Qulaylat, a radical Lebanese Muslim backed by Libya and some Palestinian fedayeen groups. His Independent Nasserite Movement has some 400-500 militiamen and can draw on substantial backing from rejectionist Palestinians, radicals within the major fedayeen groups, and Lebanese Communists. Qulaylat yesterday repeated charges that Lebanese army troops were firing on Muslim forces, and said his followers would retaliate. According to press reports from Beirut, several army vehicles were fired on by Muslim and Palestinian forces, and at least two army commandos were killed.

Lebanon's political leaders so far have come up with no strategy for ending the renewed fighting. The best hope is that the leftists—who are claiming victory—will convince themselves that their limited military gains constitute sufficient revenge for the murder of numerous Muslims by Phalangists last weekend. The Id al-Adha Muslim holiday that starts late this week may provide an excuse for both sides to stop the fighting.



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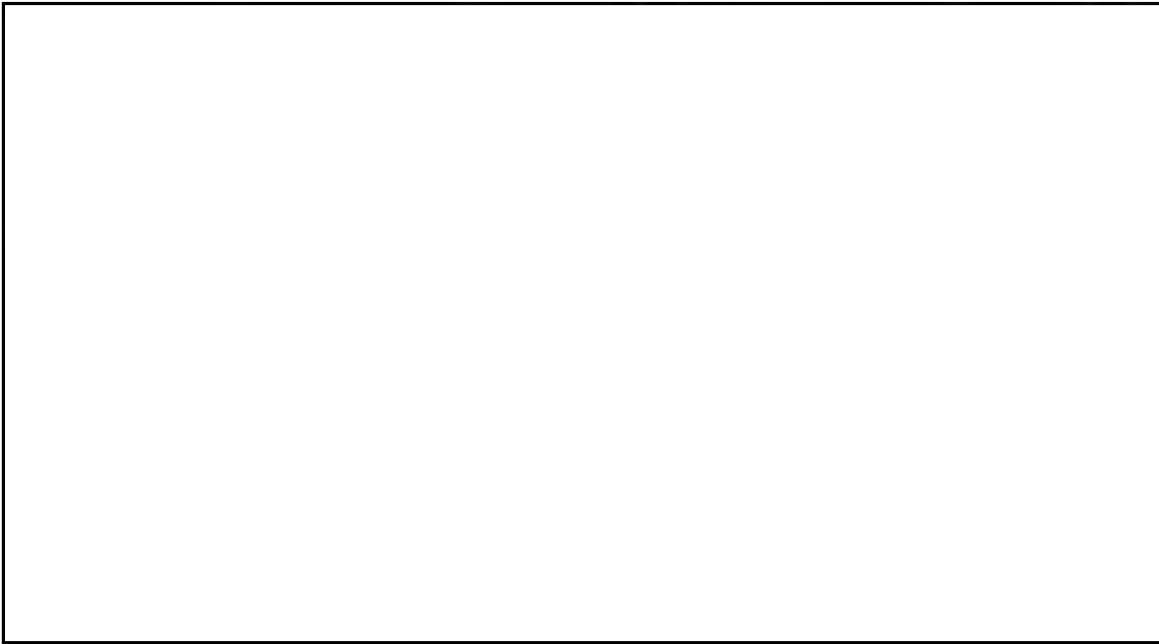
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ANGOLA

The military situation in most of Angola remains essentially unchanged as the Organization of African Unity reportedly moves toward an emergency summit on the problem.

Supporters of the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola, among others, have pressed for a summit, hoping to force a shift in the organization's position on Angola from one of neutrality to an endorsement of the Popular Movement's role. When the summit convenes—apparently not until after the first of the year—it is likely to focus on the issue of outside intervention in the Angolan conflict.



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USSR

General Secretary Brezhnev's speech at the Polish party congress yesterday was short on substance, but repeated recent criticism of the West.

As was appropriate to the occasion, Brezhnev devoted over half of the speech to talking about the steps taken toward closer economic and political cooperation between Poland and the USSR, and, more generally, about the beneficence of the communist community. He referred to the norms of "socialist internationalism"—words that in Yugoslavia and Romania translate to Soviet hegemonism—but he quickly followed with a sentence alluding to the independence and sovereignty of the states that make up the communist community.

In commenting on relations with the West, CSCE was clearly on Brezhnev's mind, perhaps because the Polish party congress offered an appropriate venue for repeating a few "truths" about the Helsinki agreement. His demand that no single aspect of the agreement be emphasized over another and his criticism of the West for its alleged failure to disseminate the text sufficiently have been said before; so, too, has his reference to "ideological penetration" by the West. He made explicit reference to the follow-up CSCE session in Belgrade in 1977 and spoke favorably of the possibility of organizing European congresses to address such problems as the environment and energy over the next two years. This clearly was meant as a trial balloon, and more will probably be heard from Moscow on this matter.

Brezhnev's speech, as is often the case, is as interesting for what he chose not to say as for what he actually said. There was no rejoinder, implicit or explicit, to criticism in the US regarding Soviet activities in Angola. He made no mention of a communist duty to support liberation movements, nor did he refer to the inevitability of continued ideological struggle. He did repeat the familiar formulation on moving ahead with detente despite the efforts of Western critics, but he did not say anything explicit about relations with the US or about SALT.

The US embassy in Moscow comments that Brezhnev's remarks attacking "some influential circles in the West" for their campaign of "disinformation and slander" against the communist camp are among his most intemperate in the past several years.

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UK

The British defense budget is coming under increasing fire as the Labor cabinet debates the allocation of scarce government resources.

Until recently, defense officials had been confident that their budget would emerge relatively unscathed from the government's overall reductions of public spending. Within the past few days, however, there have been reports that Chancellor of the Exchequer Healey is leading a strong drive within the cabinet to distribute cuts across the board without regard to the substantial reductions imposed on the military by Parliament earlier this year.

The cabinet split over defense is not along the usual right-left lines. Healey is apparently supported by moderate as well as left-wing ministers whose departments would have to absorb extra cuts if defense does not assume its "fair share." Opposition to further significant reductions in defense spending is coming chiefly from Foreign Secretary Callaghan and Defense Minister Mason. In addition to arguing that new cuts would jeopardize Britain's contribution to NATO, Mason is sure to support his case by pointing out that large cuts would have a negative impact on British defense industries, and thus contribute to the already severe unemployment.

The key element in the final decision will be Prime Minister Wilson, who reportedly is still seeking to minimize reductions. Wilson's decision will be influenced not only by the cabinet debate but also by public opinion, which may in turn be affected by the generally negative attitude taken by the press toward further reductions in defense spending. Sentiment in the House of Commons is also a factor, as are the attitudes taken by Britain's NATO partners, particularly the US.

A knowledgeable British journalist told a US official last week that the cabinet is considering annual reductions of \$200 million to \$400 million, beginning in 1977. These cuts would be in addition to the \$220 million already slashed from the 1976 budget. Ministry of Defense officials reportedly believe they can handle new cuts of up to \$300 million per year, but larger cuts would necessitate the elimination of some weapons programs.

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GREECE-CYPRUS

The Greek and Cypriot governments have responded negatively to recent Turkish proposals to resume intercommunal talks but have kept the door open for discussions at the NATO ministerial meetings this week in Brussels.

Greek Foreign Minister Bitsios, who had earlier offered to resume the Cyprus talks even if there were no fixed agenda, criticized Turkish Foreign Minister Caglayangil for releasing the Turkish proposals to the press before relaying them to Athens. Bitsios seemed unenthusiastic about Ankara's proposal to broaden the talks to include Greek and Turkish representatives and to change the format. The Turkish proposal would apparently entail a change of venue from Vienna, where the talks have been held under the auspices of UN Secretary General Waldheim, to Cyprus, where they would be chaired by the UN special envoy to Cyprus with only occasional involvement by Waldheim.

The Greeks clearly prefer not to become directly involved in talks they know can result only in a settlement unfavorable to the Greek Cypriots. Athens also wants to avoid overshadowing the Cypriot government, whose legitimacy and international status Greece is trying to bolster.

The Makarios government has not reacted officially to Caglayangil's proposals but on Monday the National Council, an unofficial all-party advisory group, specifically rejected them.

[REDACTED]

The Cyprus problem may be complicated further on Friday when the UN Security Council begins deliberations on an extension of the mandate for the UN peacekeeping force on Cyprus. Angry at the hostility they have met in the General Assembly, the Turkish Cypriots threatened to oust the force from their zone and have already sharply curtailed its humanitarian activities. At Ankara's request, Turkish Cypriot leader Denktash has toned down his criticism of the force, but the Turks will apparently insist that the UN make a separate agreement with the Turkish Cypriot administration on the force's role in the Turkish Cypriot zone.

The Makarios government is opposed to a change in the wording of the force's mandate and will also call on the Security Council to endorse the recent Assembly resolution on Cyprus. Indications are, however, that both sides may show some flexibility and thereby facilitate a compromise solution.

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BANGLADESH

For the first time since 1969, Bangladesh has avoided the threat of famine in the preharvest months of October and November.

High stocks at the beginning of 1975, good growing conditions, and continuing massive flows of foreign aid all contributed to the favorable situation. Violence associated with the coups and counter-coups since August has not damaged crops or transportation facilities. Grain production for the year ending June 30, 1976, will probably reach a record level of at least 12.2 million metric tons.

Nevertheless, import requirements remain at about 2 million tons to meet the needs of the predominantly import-based official distribution system for urban and government employees. Imports of about 1.5 million tons have already been arranged for this year, including 400,000 tons of PL-480 Title I wheat and rice. As a result of the favorable grain position, some donors are considering delaying additional food aid shipments.

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ETHIOPIA

The provisional military government has lifted the state of emergency that was declared in Addis Ababa on September 30. Dissident activity by students and workers in the capital has been put down with mass arrests.

Eritrea Province remains generally quiet. Minor raids on government convoys and positions by Eritrean insurgents continue, but there has been no heavy fighting for months. In addition, the Ethiopian Democratic Union, which has considerable peasant support in the provinces bordering Sudan, has reportedly attacked two towns in western Begemdir Province, inflicting heavy losses on government forces. Although the group failed to capture and hold either town, the casualties it inflicted could increase confidence in its leadership and influence the civilian population to rally behind anti-government forces.

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FOR THE RECORD

IRAN: The Iranian navy plans a two-month good-will cruise across the Indian Ocean beginning on January 5, 1976. This will be the first extensive deployment of an Iranian task group as far as Australian waters. The group, including a guided-missile destroyer, a guided-missile destroyer escort, an unarmed supply ship, and a coastal escort, will call at Sri Lanka, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Australia, the Maldives Islands, and India. Iran plans to utilize US navy fleet-movement reports and weather and logistic services to support the group. The cruise will be a major undertaking for the Iranian navy and will underscore the Shah's announced intention to extend his influence beyond the Persian Gulf.

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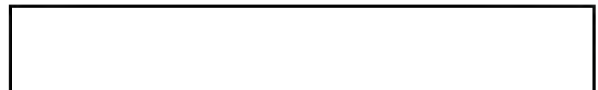
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